1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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to the Arapaho "white-stand" and "red-stand" head-dresses of upright feathers surrounding the head. The dancers are described as all old or elderly women, which among the Arapaho was not the case. The exceptions were two participants called "calves" (nihanou, "yellow calves"), who were middle-aged, or, at any rate, adults. Among the Arapaho the "calves" were children. There is a further difference, that, whereas among the Arapaho the "calves" were of high degree in the dance and for the greater part of the time were not allowed to stir, the Gros Ventre "calves" took the place of the atsaan or servants in the men's dances. They are said to have worn no regalia. The dancers were painted with the symbol of a pipe on each cheek, close under the eye. Old men sang for them, rattling but not using a drum. The women in dancing shifted their weight from one side of the body to the other, and cried like crows. Two tent-poles, two pegs, and two ropes belonging to the dancing-lodge, were painted respectively one black and one red. On the fourth day of the ceremony there were observances outside of the dancing-lodge. A prominent chief was selected to take a burning stick. The dancers, moving and running about like a herd of buffalo, pretended to scent the smoke of his fire from windward, and stampeded. Another distinguished warrior pretended to shoot at the herd as if they were buffalo. Both of these features of the ceremony are found among the Arapaho. A third distinguished man (or perhaps several) was honored by being offered a pipe to smoke, and on his acceptance was given a vessel of water containing berries. He then gave away property.

The Sun-Dance.

As stated before, the Gros Ventre sun-dance, haçeihaⁿwᵘ, is not restricted to men belonging to certain age-companies, but, as among the Arapaho, can be made by any man.[1] Like the other dances, however, it is made as the result of the pledge of an individual for deliverance from sickness or danger. As soon as the pledge has been publicly announced, or as soon thereafter as the buffalo begin to get fat in spring, the pledger and his relatives begin to accumulate buffalo-tongues, which they slice and dry like buffalo-meat. They also save a buffalo-skin, which is packed with the tongues, two sticks being wrapped up in it. When the time comes, a large lodge made of two tent-covers is set up in the middle of the camp-circle. Into this many women enter at night to sing. This marks the beginning of the ceremony. The tent is called tjinaaⁿwᵘ ("prairie-chicken lodge"); and the participants, "prairie-chickens" and "prairie-chicken women." The pledger brings his buffalo-skin to this lodge. He incenses it four times.

[1] See Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. XVIII, Part II, p. 152.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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repeated this stunt twice more, but this was too much for these old women, who then started fighting and shouting recriminations, blaming each other. The boys of course were in high glee as the old women hit each other and grunted. Finally, however, they called the daughter of one of the old women, saying: 'Come and see these old ones fighting. Try and stop them. They will kill each other.' So as the boys ran away, the younger woman restored peace."

Care of the aged devolved upon close kin. Whereas old men customarily lived directly with the households to which they were attached, old windows usually lived in lodges separate from, but located near, those of relatives who provided most of their food. To old women was often relegated the care of their grandchildren, especially of their granddaughters, whom they were supposed to train from the age of about seven until such time as they were given in marriage. The young girls in turn supplied the water and fuel for their grandmothers. In case the aged person had children of his own, he was reasonably secure. Those whose dependence was on more remote relatives were less assured of good care. The aged who had special skills which could be exercised in spite of debility, especially those who possessed "medicine power," were better off than the others.[1]

In dealing with old people it was said that much patience and forbearance were often necessary. For instance, one old woman, now deceased, was described by a relative in the following terms: "She was a hardboiled old jane, rough and tough, who didn't hesitate to tell you what she thought of things. But she had many friends and when visitors came she would swell up and be proud when they sat beside her rather than beside one of the several other old women who lived in the same place. Usually during the visit, however, she would get mad and threaten all kinds of things, and people would have to humor her. One day she really blew up and said: 'I'm going to save my relatives the job of hauling my carcass out, so I'm going out on the hills right now and lie out there and die!' So one of her relatives had to pretend to take her

[1] Denig, pp. 576–77, states that only such old persons who possess medicine powers are exempt from the petty tricks and other annoyances to which the aged in general are subject among northern plains tribes.

787 775 began to dig around behind her bedding and brought out a bowl such as that in which buffalo chips are pounded into powder. She said: 'Here. I want you to eat this.' It didn't look good to me and I just kind of felt it with my fingers. Instead of having sat by my sister as my mother had directed, I had remained by the door, because I felt kind of scared in some way. So I told them: 'Wait. I guess I will go out a minute. I will be right back.' But I got out of there and ran home as fast as I could go—back to my own bed, back to myself. If I had eaten what they had given me that would have been the last of me! After this dream I got well."

Mourning

765 152 As soon as word was circulated that someone had died, all relatives of that person, especially the women, were supposed to gather as soon as possible to cry and mourn for the deceased. Very close kin were expected to show their sorrow at the death of a loved one not only by crying and wailing, but also by casting off their good clothes and donning old ones,—robes, for instance, consisting of pieces of old discarded lodge covers, or ordinary robes that were rough and worn,—and by cutting the hair.[1] This latter was truly [832] a great sacrifice, for to the Gros Ventres one of the chief criteria [302] of beauty, in men and women alike, was extreme length of hair. The hair of younger children in a family was spared, even at the death of parents, but should, say, a father die, the hair of the older daughters was shorn, though not cut so short as that of the widow.

[887] An elderly woman was usually called upon to do the cutting and the widow, guided by the strength of her emotional reaction, would indicate how short she wished her hair to be. It was said that some widows would leave their hair relatively long, just free of the shoulders, while others " when they felt too badly, had all their hair cut off, almost as men now wear their hair."

Close kin were accustomed to further show grief by going off to the hills and fasting, crying aloud as they wandered about alone, and sleeping out without shelter. A parent would have done so at the loss of a son, one spouse at the death of the other, or a sister for her deceased brother. Such mourners would stay out

[1] For this and other practices in mourning, see Kroeber, 1908, p. 181.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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*796 is far from complete. It does, however, help to fill out some details of the picture given by Kroeber.[33]

According to The Boy the Dance and the following one, the Old Women's Dance, were originally gifts from the buffalo. But the circumstances under which they were given were unknown even to the old men living in The Boy's lifetime. These two Dances were closely associated with the buffalo. In both, the dancers im- [324] personated buffalo, and the performance of both Dances was efficacious in bringing buffalo for the hunters to kill.

The Old Men's Dance, like the other Sacred Dances, was held only in the summer time, and only in fulfillment of a vow. The Boy was of the opinion that it lasted only one day.[34]

To be eligible to vow or to join the Law Enforcer's Dance, a man had to be well advanced in age, presumably having gone through the other Lodges, at least the Fly, Crazy, Kit-fox and Dog. The Drum Dance was dropped out of the series at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as noted above, and the Sacrifice Dance was regarded as outside of the series. While the participants were older men, somewhat beyond the prime of life, "they were still active and could get around." Since they would [88?] still be eligible to vow and carry out the Sacrifice Dance they had not yet completed their society and dance career. So far as we could gather, their age range was seemingly from about the late forties or early fifties to the early or middle sixties.

Those who went through the Dance with the vower thereof were, according to The Boy, the men of about the same age-group who had gone through the other sacred Dances together,—seemingly therefore those who had been members of the same age-group of the Star or Wolves. Such a fellow member, who when invited by the others refused to join, was "punished."

The ritual grandfathers of the chief vower and of his associates were chosen from the ranks of the "retired old men" who had already gone through the Dance. According to The Boy, the chief vower's grandfather had to be a man who had himself previously gone through it as chief vower.

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[33] Kroeber, 1908, pp. 258-59.

[34] It was a four day rite according to information given to Kroeber, 1908, p. 259.

7: Flannery E-5 (1940, 1945) 1947
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796 178 the original Grass dance, the number participating, however, both as officers and as general audience, being very much larger.

Although the dog ritual, carried out as described for the earlier period, remained the highlight and climax of the Grass dance, the general program had been enlarged to include other features. Not only were procedures introduced in connection with the newer offices, as indicated above, but other items such as the Owl dance and the Ringtail dance were introduced. The order of events was apparently determined by the "chiefs" at each performance of the Grass dance, but the general program did not vary markedly. The Ringtail dance, for instance, was always included at some time.

When the order for the Ringtail dance was given, any who wished to participate formed a circle facing inward and both men and women were free to choose partners of the opposite sex. The man placed his arm over the shoulders of his partner while she placed her arm around his back. The whole group moved in a circle clockwise in rhythm to the music provided by a group of singers other than those who sang and drummed for the dog ritual and other ceremonies in which officers as such participated. [887] Any middle-aged or older woman who wished to do so might join the singers for any of the round dances. If none volunteered then they were sometimes drafted simply by being invited and led over to the spot where the male singers were performing.

796 533 178 It occasionally happened that during this dance, when the singers had "hit the spot,"—aroused the spirit of the crowd and the floor was full,—the singers would stop all of a sudden, but without giving the usual signal to disperse. Then, without advance notice, they would start singing again, but a different song, a "punishing song." This was a feature obviously based on the "punishing songs" of the original Grass dance, but the tunes were different and it was carried out in the following way.

There were only two of these newer "punishing songs" but as soon as the dancers heard the singers start one of them they knew what it meant: "Now we are in for it. We will have to dance and dance!" The singers could sing the first of these